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EXTRACTS FROM MR. ABBOT'S DIARY.

(Continued from page 13.)

No. VII.

His manner of observing days of Faſting and Thanksgiving:

1728, 9. *March* 6. *Thurſday, and Faſt-day.*] I WAS mindful of the approaching Faſt on the Wedneſday; and I hope I prayed heartily to be prepared to humble my ſoul before the Lord for my ſins, and to keep ſuch a faſt as God hath choſen. And I hope the glorious God heard my unworthy requeſts: For, bleſſed be his name! I enjoyed a ſweet day of it. I hope I did truly deſire to be humbled for my own ſins, and the ſins of the land; and to lament after the Lord; and to ſeek of him a right way, and his bleſſing in all my ways: and his bleſſing on the town, and on the land. I hope and truſt I was ſincere in ſecret and in family prayer: and I deſire to acknowledge with thankfulneſs the aids of God's grace afforded to me. I did behold ſome of the beauty of the Lord, and had ſome ſweet delight in inquiring in his temple: And in the afternoon, juſt in the cloſe of the public worſhip, I hope I unfeignedly renewed the conſent of my ſoul to be the Lord's. O glorious God! Pardon what has been amiſs this day!—Give me grace to be ſincere! And having confeſſed, help me to forſake; that I may find mercy!

April 2, 1730. *Thurſday; a day of public Faſting and Prayer.*] I deſire to be humbly thankful unto the glorious God for the

aids of his grace afforded to me. I hope I was ſincere and earneſt in confeſſing and bewailing my own ſins, the ſins of my relations, family ſins, and the ſins of the town and land. Alſo in my prayers to God for *perſonal bleſſings;* eſpecially that I might never ſin as I have done, and might ſerve him better than I uſed to do.——And for our *family*, and all pertaining to it; that we might each of us be bleſſed with all the bleſſings we need, and have all our ſouls bound up in the bundle of life. And for the ſociety whereto I belong; that we may be kept from the ſnares and temptations we are expoſed to in youth, and might all be made exemplary Chriſtians. And for the houſes of this people, that they might be Bethels. And for the churches of Chriſt in this town and land, that God would revive his work in them by converting of ſinners, and edifying his children. And for the town, that the glorious God would pardon the ſins of it, and reform its diſorders: That he would ſanctify all his judgments to us; and in particular the preſent viſitation,* with the diſtreſſes that attend it; and that he would ſpare his people in his great mercy; and by all purge our iniquities, and take away our ſins, and enable us to turn to the Lord who is ſmiting of us. And for the whole land, that it might be Emmanuel's land, and much of his glory dwell in it: and that this people might all repent of their ſins, and turn to the Lord as one man. And that God would avert all the judgments we fear, and graciouſly remove thoſe we feel; continue to us the mercies we enjoy, and beſtow on us thoſe we need, both temporal and ſpiritual.——And at the cloſe of the day in ſecret on my knees, I did ſolemnly renew my covenant with the glorious God, and give myſelf up afreſh to him. Oh! that the glorious God of all grace would accept of me, and of my poor ſervices this day, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord: and help me to live up to my covenant engagements to be his. And, Oh! that he would give an anſwer of peace to my poor prayers for myſelf, my relatives and acquaintance, for his churches, for the town and land. And, Oh! that the faſtings, humiliations, and ſupplications of this people, may find a gracious acceptance with the Lord that heareth prayer: That this day may be a day of atonement for our land. Even ſo be it. Amen and Amen.

March 25, 1731.] I deſired to be prepared for this day of faſting and prayer,—and hope I was graciouſly aſſiſted to confeſs and bewail my own ſins, family ſins, relative, and public ſins, that I could call to mind: and did lift up my prayer to God for all needful perſonal, private and public favours. And after ſecret prayer in the evening, I renewed the dedication of myſelf to the Lord, to be his entirely and forever.

October 21.] This Thankſgiving Day I was of a very deſirable frame, and enjoyed ſweet communion with the glorious God through

* *The Small Pox.*

through my Lord Jesus Christ, in offering up my solemn praises to him—Was very temperate in the use of God's good creatures.—And at the close of this day, I had sweet communion with God in my secret devotions. And having then offered up my praises and prayers to him, I did on my knees, solemnly, and I hope sincerely, renew the dedication of myself, of all my powers and members, of all that I am, have, and can do, to be His entirely and forever, in a perpetual and everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten: And did take God the Father, Son, and Spirit, for my Father, Saviour, Guide and Comforter; for my God forever, and my eternal portion. I did also take the word of my God for my rule, and resolve to make the glory of God my end in all I do: Desiring and resolving to depend upon a glorious CHRIST for strength, through the assistances of his grace and spirit, to do whatever the Lord my God requires of me; and to trust in the merits, righteousness, and intercession of my dear Redeemer alone, for justification, acceptance with God, and eternal life, after I have done all that I can do.—The whole of this day was comfortable to me; but especially in the evening after I had been thus employed in secret, I enjoyed a most composed and peaceful mind, and was filled with satisfaction, comfort and joy; solaced with some manifestations, and further hopes of the divine favour. O! that I might forever live to the glory of my *great Creator, gracious Preserver, bountiful Benefactor, almighty Redeemer, blessed Sanctifer, and my only rightful Lord and Sovereign.* AMEN!

(*To be concluded in the next Number.*)

PHILETAS, THE PILGRIM.

PHILETAS, having conceived the idea of being a pilgrim, set off from the banks of the Seine for the Holy Land without informing himself what was necessary for such a life. In those times, when pilgrims were numerous, there were men in every city and village to direct them in their way, to inform them what was necessary for their support, to warn them of dangers, and to encourage them with assistance, they might expect. Among these guides were many, who exercised the office, more to distinguish themselves and amuse others, than really to benefit their fellow-creatures. They were ignorant of the way, and despised a pilgrim's life. Instead, therefore, of describing the places where enemies lay in ambush to destroy, where inviting paths turned off to the right hand or left, instead of informing them where provisions might be obtained for their necessities, they were constantly suggesting new themes, respecting

ing the beſt mode of performing pilgrimages. They often dwelt with rapture on the beauties of a new road laid out through a populous vale, which avoided all the rocky hills, ſnowy mountains, and gloomy foreſts of the old way. They often made themſelves merry in painting the melancholy, the ſadneſs and diſtreſs of the *old way*, pointing the finger of deriſion at thoſe pilgrims, who ſtill were ſeen travelling in it. So they rendered themſelves amuſing and pleaſant guides.

Philetas, being a man of an eaſy mind, and a lover of pleaſure, always applied to theſe for direction. When he happened to hear the faithful, who knew the way, they pained, and diſtreſſed, and terrified his ſoul. They inſiſted he was not in the way to the land of Canaan, that he muſt take the old way, of which he had diſmal impreſſions, or he would never, never tread the holy land. So intelligibly did they ſhow him on a map of the country, that he was going wrong; ſo ſeriouſly, ſo affectionately, ſo devoutly, were their directions delivered, that ſometimes he was almoſt perſuaded to believe them: nor could he generally lull his conſcience to ſleep again till he found one of his pleaſant guides, whoſe poſitive manner, whoſe eaſy humour, would reſtore his wonted hilarity. Their inſtructions, however, were always given in ſuch a vague, general, and ambiguous manner, that no mortal could, with confidence, apply them in practice. Philetas was often puzzled; he knew not which courſe to purſue, and ſometimes choſe his path more by accident than wiſdom. Frequently he found himſelf ſinking in deep mire, aſſaulted by unexpected enemies, or diſtreſſed and diſcouraged where he had expected eaſe and indulgence. One thing which greatly increaſed his perplexity and agitation, was the ſight of pilgrims purſuing a very different route. Though his guides had given him a very high confidence in himſelf, yet when he ſaw the ſerioufneſs, the modeſt aſſurance, the evident ſincerity, and the divine conſolations, which often he diſcerned in the countenances of the other pilgrims, his heart would ſometimes ſink within him. "Surely," would he ſay, "theſe people have a peace, a hope, a joy, a faith, unknown to me; they may, they muſt be right. I am going wrong." But the next guide he ſaw would tell him there was no *eſſential* difference, that his courſe was the moſt *rational*. This would make him aſhamed of his fears.

After a long and weary journey, as he was deſcending a hill toward evening, the ocean ſuddenly burſt on his ſight. Amazed and alarmed, he ſtopped; he gazed; his joints trembled, he was ſinking. At this moment one of his pleaſant guides came up, exhorted him to be of good comfort, aſſuring him that his labours were over, that he had reached the ſouthern point of Europe, that a veſſel would immediately waft him

acroſs

acroſs the narrow ſea to the land of Canaan, that ſoon he would walk the pavements of Jeruſalem, aſcend Mount Calvary, and reſt himſelf in the tomb of Jeſus.

Philetas ſeemed to revive; with a trembling heart he deſcended to the ſhore. As he approached the water a veſſel was waiting; a ſtrong man, ſeizing his hand, pulled him on board. Though terrified, he ſtill hoped it was a zealous friend, aſſiſting him to finiſh his pilgrimage. But ſoon, ſoon, his eyes were opened, and he ſaw himſelf undone. The pirates robbed him, loaded him with chains, and landed him in Algiers. There will he ſpend the remainder of his life in wretchedneſs and ſlavery. There he weeps in deſpair, reproaches himſelf, and pours execrations on his unfaithful guides.

Reader, thou haſt made the application. In the falſe guides you ſee thoſe preachers, who refuſe to ſhow ſinners the plague of their own hearts, and their danger of future deſtruction. In Philetas you ſee thoſe unwiſe hearers, who reject the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, who declare the whole counſel of God, who, knowing the terrors of the Lord themſelves, wiſh to perſuade others to be reconciled to God. Philetas repreſents thoſe preſumptuous hearers, who had rather riſque everlaſting burning, than now to hear the diſmal ſounds of hell and damnation.

EUSEBIUS.

For the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.

ON RESPECT OF PERSONS.

IT is allowed by all, that to be a reſpecter of perſons is wrong and criminal in any moral agent. At the ſame time, it is probable that ſome attach very erroneous ideas to the phraſe. It is the object of the following remarks, to ſhow, with as much preciſion as the writer is able, what it is to be a reſpecter of perſons.

To be a reſpecter of perſons, as the phraſe is commonly underſtood among men, is to ſhow favour to ſome and refuſe it to others, from partial, intereſted motives. To ſhow more favour to ſome perſons than to others, if it be not done from partial, intereſted motives, is not conſidered by mankind in general, as reſpecting perſons in any criminal ſenſe. For inſtance; to expreſs more eſteem and reſpect for a man of diſtinguiſhed virtue and merit, than for a man, infamouſly vicious, or to beſtow more favours upon the honeſt, induſtrious poor, than upon the idle and knaviſh, provided it be done with proper motives, is never

never considered, by reasonable men, as a criminal respect of persons. Nor can it be considered as a criminal respect of persons, for one to show more favour to some than to others, of persons who are equally deserving, provided it be done with disinterested motives. The Governor of the Commonwealth cannot be accused of respecting persons, for bestowing an honourable and lucrative office upon one citizen, and passing by another equally capable and meritorious, if, owing to certain circumstances, he really thinks it will be more conducive to the public good. And, on the other hand, supposing two criminals, equally guilty, are under sentence of death, and the Chief Magistrate is convinced that the safety of the state requires the execution of but one of them: who will accuse him of respecting persons, for pardoning the one and giving orders for the execution of the other?

But, if a man shows peculiar favour or respect to certain persons, rather than to others, from partial, interested motives, he is universally and justly considered as a respecter of persons. If a parent, from a partial, unreasonable fondness for one of his children, confers on him peculiar favours, he is a respecter of persons. If a judge shows favour to some, on account of their relation to himself, or on account of their rank, fortune or connexions, and denies justice to others, because they are poor, or ignorant, or destitute of opulent and powerful friends, he is an odious respecter of persons. Thus it appears, that, according to the common acceptation of the phrase among mankind, to be a respecter of persons, is to show favour to some and refuse it to others, from partial, interested motives. And, in this sense the phrase is used in the holy Scriptures.

Thus, in the laws which God gave the children of Israel, he enjoined this upon them, Leviticus xix. 15. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." Again, he tells the same people, Deuteronomy i. 16, 17. "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man."

The words of St. James show, very plainly, the scriptural idea of respect of persons. James ii. 1—10. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here

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in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my foot-stool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves? —If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

If the preceding remarks are just, they lay a foundation for the following inferences.

1. When it is said in Scripture, that, *God is no respecter of persons*, the meaning is, that he does not treat his moral subjects in a partial, unjust manner: but that he treats them all, and mankind in particular, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, Jew and Gentile, according to their characters, without any undue favour or affection whatever. He is high above all sinister views and partial attachments. All those distinctions of honour and rank and wealth and nation, which are made among men, are levelled in His presence, before whom the inhabitants of the earth are as grass-hoppers, and from whom the greatest are as far removed as the least. He will distribute justice and judgment, with an equal hand. Them that honour Him, however poor, and low, and despised in this world, He will honour: but them that despise Him, however great and rich and noble they may be considered among men, He will lightly esteem. He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. He will save saints and destroy sinners.

This not only follows from the above remarks, but is evident from several passages of Scripture. The following are worthy of particular attention. Acts x. 34, 35. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but, in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Rom. ii. 6—11. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honour and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: *For there is no respect of persons with God.*"

2. From the preceding observations, it appears, that God's being no respecter of persons, does not afford any evidence that He will save all mankind. Universalists frequently say, that if God saves some of mankind and destroys the rest, He will be a respecter of persons. This is as much as to say, that God cannot, without respecting persons, treat mankind differently, in the world

world to come. Whereas, it is beceauſe He *is* no reſpecter of perſons, that he *will* treat them differently. At the great and laſt day God will ſit on the judgment-ſeat, and diſpenſe rewards and puniſhments among mankind, according to their characters and the deeds which they have done in the body. He will not do the leaſt injuſtice, nor ſhow the leaſt partiality. But, ſhould He, at that day, clear the guilty, ſhould He adjudge thoſe to ſalvation who died in impenitency and unbelief, He would not act the part of an upright judge; He would ſhow a partial regard to ſinners, to the neglect of the glory of His character and the good of His kingdom. What could ſavour more of reſpect of perſons, than for God to beſtow heavenly bleſſedneſs upon thoſe who remain incorrigible enemies to his character and government, and who, during life, have deſpiſed the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance and long ſuffering? That God is no reſpecter of perſons, is a concluſive argument againſt the doctrine of univerſal ſalvation, and ſhould make all univerſaliſts tremble, in a view of the awful conſequences of their perſevering impenitency and neglect of the great ſalvation offered in the goſpel.

3. God may form the moral characters of his rational creatures, as He pleaſes, without being a reſpecter of perſons. Reſpect of perſons relates to characters already formed, and not to the formation of characters. God's being no reſpecter of perſons implies, that He will treat all his accountable creatures in an impartial, juſt and equitable manner, according to their ſeveral characters. It is impoſſible to ſhow reſpect to perſons, before they are made, or have any moral characters, either good or bad.

God ſaw it to be neceſſary, in order to accompliſh his original and benevolent deſign in creating the univerſe, that there ſhould be creatures of different capacities and of different moral characters. He ſaw it to be neceſſary, that there ſhould be good and evil angels, and good and bad men. Accordingly, he determined to bring angels and men into exiſtence and to form their characters according to his pleaſure. He had the moſt wiſe and benevolent end in view, in determining the exiſtence and moral characters of all his rational creatures: and in bringing them into exiſtence and actually forming their characters, he has no partiality for any one. His ultimate end is, to diſplay his own glory and to make a univerſe, which ſhall contain the greateſt poſſible ſum of holineſs and happineſs. As the great potter, he moulds the clay into veſſels of different ſizes and ſhapes, according to the uſe he intends to make of them. As the potter diſplays no partiality, in forming different veſſels for different uſes: ſo God is no reſpecter of perſons, in forming men of different characters for different ends. In forming

forming the moral characters of his creatures, God displays his *sovereignty;* in his treatment of them, after their moral characters are formed, He displays his *justice* and his *grace*, without respect of persons.

4. From what hath been brought into view, it appears, that God's being no respecter of persons, is no solid objection against the doctrine of election. The Scripture teaches us, that God elected some to everlasting life, that he might glorify himself in their deliverance from sin and misery. And in determining the number and the individuals, whom he would save, he was guided by his own infinite wisdom. He determined to save as many as it would be best to save. And he fixed on the individuals, with a view, not to their good simply, but to his own glory and the highest good of his kingdom. He had no more respect to the persons of those whom he elected, than to the persons of those whom he did not elect. He did not elect some, because he valued their happiness more than the happiness of others. He viewed the souls of men, as all precious, all equally capable of happiness and deserving of misery. He determined to regenerate and save those, whom he saw it would be most for his own glory or the general good, to regenerate and save. Hence, there was no respect of persons with God, in electing some to everlasting life. But, had he elected those to salvation, whom he knew he could not save, without injury to the universe, would he not have shown a partial respect to the persons of those sinners? Shall not God express more regard for his own glory and the good of his kingdom, than for the happiness of any one or of any number of sinful, hell deserving creatures?

THEOPHILUS.

EXTRACT

From the Life of A. J.

IN religious opinion, she was what is generally termed a high Calvinist; but she was far from abusing the doctrines of grace, as too many do;—while they administered comfort to her soul, they excited her to diligence in duty. Her attendance at the house of God was remarkably punctual. When indisposition rendered it almost imprudent to stir out of doors, she could not be persuaded to neglect the means of grace. During upwards of twenty years, though her family was very numerous, she never suffered a daughter or a servant to stay at home to prepare a dinner on the Lord's-Day. Her

regular attention to the ſeaſon of family-prayer deſerves to be noticed. If a ſtranger or friend happened to viſit them in the evening, ſhe would bring the Bible to her huſband at the uſual time, apologizing by ſaying, "The children muſt go to bed; and it would be improper to let them go before prayer." On ſuch occaſions as theſe, ſhe would frequently remark, that parental example might produce ſome happy effect on the children in future; and that, if they derived no benefit from it, they ſhould not have to ſay their parents lived without prayer.

She was favoured, almoſt habitually, with an extraordinary degree of confidence in God. Her laſt attack was of ſuch a nature as to prevent any particular expreſſions of confidence or comfort; but her end was evidently peace. On the Friday morning ſhe was ſeized with a violent pain in her breaſt: it was ſo excruciating, that ſhe could not reſt in the ſame poſture for one minute till ſix o'clock in the evening. During theſe agonies, ſhe was aſked how ſhe felt in her mind. Her reply was, "Oh! I am very comfortable! The Lord is very kind and good to me,—His goodneſs is above all praiſe." Her huſband then aſked her if the family ſhould unite in helping her to praiſe the Lord. "O yes," ſaid ſhe, "praiſe him, praiſe him, praiſe him, for his goodneſs to me!" After this ſhe was ſcarcely able to articulate, and was only heard to ſay, occaſionally, "Very comfortable! very comfortable!" About one o'clock on the Saturday morning ſhe became inſenſible, and died about eight in the evening. Thoſe who were acquainted with her will teſtify, that ſhe was truly "a mother in Iſrael."

LETTER TO A MINISTER.

To the Editors of the MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following letter was written to a miniſter of the goſpel by a youth, who did not deſign the publication of it. If you think it worthy of a place in your Magazine, you have liberty to inſert it.

B.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

IF in this world only Chriſtians had hope, they might with propriety be thought of all men the moſt miſerable. They are often expoſed to ſufferings and perſecutions for the word of truth. They live in a world, which is hoſtile to God, to his cauſe,

cauſe, and to his people. They live among beings, who hate moral light, and the children of light. They have in themſelves evil hearts of unbelief; hearts bent to backſliding. They have a law in their members, warring againſt the law of their minds, and bringing them into captivity to the law of ſin and death.

In ſuch circumſtances they have need of ſtrong conſolation. This conſolation the Bible and the Holy Spirit afford. Ought not Chriſtians to eſteem as bleſſings, all things that are promiſed to them in Scripture? Sanctification, glorification, and the recovery of their bodies from the power of the grave are promiſed them. Theſe, they readily allow to be bleſſings. But is it lawful for them to ſelect a few things, and call them bleſſings, while others, which belong to them as Chriſtians, are entirely neglected, or called judgments? If it be ſaid, that all things ſhall work together for good to them, who love God, to them, who are the called according to his purpoſe, is it not proper to call *all* things bleſſings? In ſhort, did it not look aſſuming, I would ſtate and endeavour to prove this ſentiment, 'that all the ſufferings endured by Chriſtians, are, in ſome ſenſe, a part of that ineſtimable inheritance, to which they are heirs in conſequence of adoption.' This ſentiment, if realized, would afford unſpeakable ſatisfaction to real ſaints in adverſity. If they always felt that they were in the hands of a merciful God, who does not afflict willingly, they would glory in tribulation.

That all things, even afflictions, are bleſſings to Chriſtians, is evident from the diſpenſation, under which they live. They are not under the law, but under free, rich, amazing grace. The moment they become Chriſtians, they are delivered from condemnation, made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt. God places them in this ſituation for the praiſe of the glory of his grace, which he intends to diſplay to the higheſt poſſible degree. If this be true, is it not juſt to conclude, that they receive from God nothing but grace or favour? If they receive ſomething beſide favours, it is plain, that they are not ſubjects of the higheſt poſſible grace, for the higheſt grace of neceſſity excludes every thing but favours.

The experience of the ſaints proves the truth of the ſentiment. The pſalmiſt ſays, "before I was afflicted I went aſtray; but now have I kept thy word." So that he might ſafely conclude, "it is *good* for me, that I have been afflicted." Chriſtians in general confeſs, that they enjoy more of God in adverſity, than in proſperity. Surely that, which leads to the enjoyment of God, may be eſteemed a bleſſing.

Among the promiſes of the goſpel, thoſe of perſecution and affliction hold a diſtinguiſhed place. In the tenth chapter of Mark,

Mark, Chriſt mentions the bleſſings which belong to every true Chriſtian. "He ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with *perſecutions*, and in the world to come eternal life. In the ſixteenth of John, he ſays,—in the world ye ſhall have *tribulation*." The apoſtle tells us, that "he, who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer *perſecution*. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things preſent, or things to come, *all* are yours." "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord. Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth. I know, O Lord, that thou in *faithfulneſs* haſt afflicted me. If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." Since Chriſtians muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, let them remember, that their light affliction will work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. What a cheering thought is this. Chriſtians have choſen for their friend, that Being, who governs all things. God has loved them with an everlaſting love. This love he manifeſts toward them by calling them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. He juſtifies them freely, entitles them to his favour, engages to be their God, and to do for them all that is beſt. What rich proviſion is made for the preſent benefit, and the future glory of the elect. Chriſt ſays, "fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom." Paul reaſons from what God had already done to what he would do. If he ſpared not his own Son, how ſhall he ſpare any other favour? If he gave his own Son, how ſhall he not alſo freely give all things? Since juſtification was beſtowed on them, while enemies to God, how ſhall they not receive every other good thing, when they are his friends?

But how difficult it is to live under the impreſſion, that croſſes and afflictions are real bleſſings. How difficult to be unfeignedly thankful for them. How difficult always to rejoice that the diſpenſations of Providence toward us are, as they are. But reaſon as well as ſcripture, teaches us, that it is deſirable to live under the government, and to be at the diſpoſal of a wiſe and holy God.

How abſurd then muſt it be to regret the exiſtence of any event which takes place in the world. The rebellious language of ſuch regret is, "O, that God would govern better! O that he would alter his eternal decree! O that I had the direction of affairs!"

If it be true, that the Chriſtian receives nothing but favour, is it not true likewiſe, that the impenitent ſinner receives nothing but judgment, or nothing but what tends to aggravate his condemnation? This ſeems to be the ſentiment of the Bible.

Did

Did Chriſt come into the world, that the world might be ſaved? For *judgment* likewiſe he came into the world. Was he the *light* of the world? This alſo was the *condemnation*, that light came into the world. Does he intercede *for* the elect? He intercedes *againſt* the non-elect; as appears from many places in Pſalms. Does proſperity make Chriſtians more thankful and benevolent? It makes ſinners more thoughtleſs and ſelfiſh. Did afflictions make Job and David more humble and obedient? They had a contrary effect upon Pharaoh.

In view of this ſentiment how invaluable does the Bible appear. Men are too blind ever to learn this truth from the light of nature. But the Bible teaches it in the plaineſt manner. The Bible alone aſſures Chriſtians, that all things are theirs. The Bible alone can afford ſolid foundation for rational hope and joy in the darkeſt and moſt diſtreſſing hour.

REMARKABLE PROVIDENCE.

To the Editors of the Massachusetts M. Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

BEING, not long ſince, at the houſe of a Chriſtian friend, in one of the populous towns in the State of Rhode-Iſland, he related to me the following incident, which took place in his family; which, if you think worthy of public notice, you will pleaſe to inſert in your entertaining and inſtructive Magazine. THEOPHILUS.

THERE being ſome ſpecial attention to religion in the place, Mr. H. had entertained a number of his ſerious friends in his parlour, on an evening the winter paſt, with whom he ſpent the time in religious converſation. After the company had withdrawn, Mr. H. called his family into the keeping room, as uſual, to attend family devotion. After which, Mrs. H. who had, a few days before, been made a hopeful ſubject of renewing grace, retired alone to the parlour for the purpoſe of performing the too much neglected duty of ſecret prayer. As ſhe opened the door, ſhe found the room in a blaze. A brand had rolled out, and caught the floor on fire; and the houſe muſt, in all probability, have been reduced to aſhes in a few minutes, had not this timely and providential diſcovery been made. Were not the inhabitants ſaved ſo as by fire, in conſequence of the attention of this perſon to ſecret prayer? Let us watch and pray, and pray and watch.

*** *The Editors wiſh for more of Theophilus' labours.*

ON THE IXth OF ROMANS.

IT is by attending to ſelect paſſages of the word of God, and comparing them with others, that a conſiſtent ſcheme of religious ſentiment is to be collected, claiming authority from the infallibility of divine revelation. A conſiderable part of the chapter we are about commenting upon, is adduced by Calviniſts, as forming a main pillar in that plan of doctrine, which they embrace in oppoſition to Arminians. And if they have actually hit upon the true ſpirit and meaning of the apoſtle's diſcourſe, it is preſumed that none will pretend but their concluſions have a ſolid foundation in the word of God. It is well known, that election and reprobation are among the principal topics, upon which the oppoſers of Calviniſm diſſent from its abettors. And it is to be confeſſed, that the latter depend for much of their ſtrength, upon the Epiſtle to the Romans, that part of it particularly, which comes within the ixth chapter. Not that other parts of the ſacred writings are, by any means, acknowledged to be deſtitute of the like kind of materials. Language ſimilar to that of the apoſtle Paul is uſed by all the other inſpired penmen upon theſe diſtinguiſhing points; ſo that, if Calviniſts have, in juſtice, the advantage of their antagoniſts, in what they quote from Paul in the chapter before us, the ſucceſs of the controverſy will, no doubt, be adjudged to them. An impartial attempt, at leaſt, is, I hope, now about to be made, by examining the apoſtle's ſtatements, to come to an incontrovertible deciſion upon the great object and drift of his diſcourſe. To exhibit any great ſpecimen of ingenuity or clearneſs of reaſoning is not what the writer of this has much in his expectation. And whether any thing pertinent in the following obſervations is exhibited in a point of light, not perfectly familiar to the minds of readers in general, is ſubmitted. A hope of being able to do ſomething that may be uſeful, prompts to the preſent undertaking. From a frequent and careful peruſal of the chapter, not excluding from the account other portions of the epiſtle, it has become exceedingly evident in my mind, that the apoſtle is aiming to point out and prove an eſſential difference between ſaints and ſinners, depending ſolely on the ſovereign and eternal purpoſe of God; and conſequently, that ſome are raiſed up to be veſſels of mercy, and others veſſels of wrath, and that too without any thing in themſelves previouſly determining or leading to it. The apoſtle himſelf takes his premiſes chiefly from facts recorded in the Old Teſtament, and from them deduces the doctrine he is endeavouring to eſtabliſh.

His attention ſeems to be drawn to the ſubject by his affection for the Jews, and his inquiries into the nature of their ſituation,

uation. He profeſſes to be tenderly affected and ſorely grieved with the obſtinacy of their unbelief; with their madneſs in wiſhing themſelves accurſed from Chriſt, as had once been the caſe with himſelf. But while he is bewailing the great unhappineſs of that people, to whom he himſelf ſtood ſo nearly related, he ſeems, by a ſudden turn of recollection, to be ſmitten with a conſciouſneſs of doing injuſtice to the ſubject, as if he were fixing them *all* in that unbelief, which was true only of a *part*. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Iſrael that are of Iſrael." Here he adverts to a diſtinction between real Iſraelites, and thoſe who are nominally ſuch, and have no intereſt in the peculiar bleſſings of the church. And having made this diſtinction, which muſt be acknowledged a juſt one, becauſe many of that nation had become believers, while the great body of them continued in infidelity, he is naturally induced to proceed and ſhow the grounds of it. In doing this, the field of argument opens before him, as it appears in the ſequel of his diſcourſe. That a part of the Jewiſh nation embraced the Saviour, while the great multitude of them rejected him, is to be traced to the ſame cauſe with the like difference in other portions of the human race. The caſes ſtated, and the inferences drawn, admit therefore of a general application; and the manifeſt intent of them is to illuſtrate and fortify the poſition, that thoſe who obtain the kingdom of heaven, and thoſe who periſh in the kingdom of darkneſs, meet their reſpective deſtinies, agreeably to the eternal counſel, and under the ſovereign control of the divine being. Some are made ſubjects of mercy, and others fixed in ſpiritual hardneſs and unbelief, as the ſovereign purpoſe of God has ordained. That this is the doctrine contended for by the apoſtle, I ſhall labour to evince by taking a view of the ſeveral caſes adduced by him, and conſidering the objections he himſelf has taken notice of, as urged againſt the reaſoning he had adopted. By treating the ſubject with ſo much labour and minuteneſs he would ſeem to have put no ſmall advantage into our hands to become acquainted with the great object and bent of his arguing. He begins with the promiſe made to Abraham, in which the ſeed, contemplated in the covenant, is limited to Iſaac, to the excluſion of the ſon by the bond-maid. The uſe he would make of the diſtinction, viz. that *they are not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael*, &c. is, evidently, to ſhow, that there is ſomething in the divine mind, beyond what is perceived by man, which determines the purpoſes of grace in favour of ſome rather than of others. God was engaged to Abraham, by covenant, to beſtow ſignal bleſſings upon him, in regard to his ſeed. But the whole of his ſeed was not compriſed in the perſon of Iſaac. He had one ſon, who had made conſiderable progreſs towards

towards manhood, when Iſaac was born. Why might not the promiſe have been fulfilled in him? for it was manifeſtly with a view to this, that Sarah gave her handmaid into the boſom of her huſband. God was able, no doubt, to have raiſed up Abraham's firſt born for all thoſe good purpoſes that were eventually fulfilled in Iſaac. No man alive can tell why Iſhmael might not have become as fit a ſubject of the promiſe, had he been choſen of God for this end, as Iſaac; and yet it was the pleaſure of God, unmoved by any thing that then, or afterwards appeared in either of thoſe perſons, to fix his love on the latter. Therefore, it was ſaid: "In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called." They were both the ſeed of Abraham, to whom the promiſe was made; and, in this reſpect, ſtood on equal ground. They were equal too, in reſpect to perſonal deſert; for neither of them had a being when the purpoſe and promiſe of God were firſt expreſſed. But, notwithſtanding all this, one was taken and the other left. This very determinately expreſſes the ſovereignty of God's electing mercy: but as if more might be ſaid to put the matter in a ſtrong and convincing point of light, the apoſtle proceeds: "And not only this, but when Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, even by our father Iſaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth) It was ſaid unto her, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated." If any doubts remain after candidly and fairly attending to the former caſe, they muſt, one would think, be removed by a due and impartial conſideration of the preſent. The apoſtle is, evidently, not ſhifting his ſubject, when he calls up a freſh example for illuſtration, as in the words laſt quoted. It is ſtill his object to make a plain and forcible exhibition of the doctrine of the divine ſovereignty in putting a difference between perſons, who differ only in conſequence of a previous divine appointment. If this be not his object, it is hard to conceive how the caſe now under conſideration can be in point. Let us here come to a cloſe inſpection of the fact argued from, and the conſequence drawn, that we may happily attain to an uniformity of ſentiment with the inſpired apoſtle. The fact is on record in the xxvth chap. of Geneſis, where it is ſtated, that when Rebecca went to inquire of the Lord relative to her peculiar ſituation, "The Lord ſaid unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people ſhall be ſeparated from thy bowels; and the one people ſhall be ſtronger than the other people; and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger."

It now remains to inquire for what purpoſe the apoſtle has adduced this article of patriarchal hiſtory. And if, in forming a judgment,

a judgment, we are influenced only by a ſtrict regard to the manner in which he has treated the ſubject, we ſhall ſcarcely be in any danger of coming to different concluſions. His diſcourſe is too ſimple and plain to leave his meaning uncertain or ambiguous, unleſs prepoſſeſſion be allowed to tyrannize over the mind, and bias its deciſions. The apoſtle tells us, expreſsly, that what was declared to Rebecca concerning her children before they were born, had reſpect to the ſovereign purpoſe and election of God in the matter. One was choſen and the other rejected; one was loved and the other hated; not becauſe one had done better or worſe than the other, for neither of them was conſidered as having done either good or evil. No reſpect was had to any thing, either praiſe or blame worthy, that could be reckoned to the account of either of them. This is the apoſtle's repreſentation; and the difference put between them at ſo early a period, even before they were born, or had done any thing to merit either favours or frowns from the Divine Being, he predicates of that purpoſe, or election, which God puts forth without regard to works. In the counſels of God the younger was ranked before the elder, not becauſe the elder had done any thing to forfeit his birth-right; for the election of grace takes nothing of this kind into view, elſe, what is inſerted by the apoſtle could not be true, that it is not of works, but of him that calleth.

God's choice is antecedent to the works of the creature of whatever kind, and conſequently is not influenced by them. This is the plain, unequivocal language of the apoſtle in the words before us. Thoſe, who think otherwiſe, evade this conſtruction (if conſtruction that may be called which is ſo perſpicuous and explicit) by pleading that the divine prediction to Rebecca, relative to her two ſons, does not at all reſpect their private perſons, but their poſterity only, and that in a collective view. The principle aſſumed and proceeded upon is, that the caſe is eſſentially different, whether collective bodies of men or nations be conſidered as the ſubjects of a divine predeſtination, or the ſame be ſuppoſed of individuals. But if the purpoſe of God has relation to ſpiritual things, (and it is about ſuch that the apoſtle is treating) it is hard to conceive what material difference there is in the caſe, whether the ſubject of God's election be a ſingle man or a multitude. Let this be as it may, the apoſtle is either ſpeaking excluſively of the two individuals named, or extends his reaſoning to the nations they reſpectively repreſent, as if the purpoſe of God affected them in the ſame manner it does individuals. This appears from the care he takes to preclude the idea, that God's determinations concerning Jacob and Eſau, might have been formed out of reſpect to their doings. There could have been no propriety

in erecting this guard, had the great thing aimed at in the proceſs of the argument been to prove that God had, from the beginning, choſen the Iſraelitiſh nation to be richer and more formidable in war than their neighbours the Edomites. But if God choſe that the great bleſſings of his ſpiritual kingdom ſhould be the inheritance of Jacob's poſterity, rather than of Eſau's, *even ſo becauſe it ſeemeth good in his ſight*, and not becauſe they were entitled to this pre-eminence by their ſuperior virtue, it places them juſt where individuals ſtand in relation to God's ſovereign counſels of mercy; and appears in uniformity with the general tenor of the apoſtle's reaſoning. That he is aiming, in this place, to make it appear a ſcripture doctrine of great antiquity, that the caſe with God's creatures is determined long before they come into being, and conſequently, without reſpect to any deſert of theirs, is a fair, yea, I may almoſt ſay, a neceſſary conſequence of what comes in as a reply to himſelf, on the part of thoſe who would object to the plan he was endeavouring to ſettle. "What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God?" This plainly appears as an anticipation of an objection ſome may urge againſt the current of the apoſtle's reaſoning. He was not inſenſible what concluſions many would be likely to draw from the poſitions and facts he had been laying down; and was willing to allow, that, if ſuch inferences were really contained in the premiſes; if, by fair deduction, ſuch difficulties could be brought againſt the ſcheme he was labouring to vindicate, they would prove its overthrow. Like a wiſe theoriſt, therefore, he calls up to view the ſuppoſed objection to his doctrine, to examine and try it, to know what its real ſtrength is. If things are as has been repreſented, what ſhall we ſay? Shall we ſay, as ſome will, that there is unrighteouſneſs with God? The leaſt we can gather from this profeſſed, this formal endeavour of the apoſtle to extricate himſelf from the charge of implicating God in unrighteouſneſs, is, that ſome would be likely to caſt this ſtigma upon him. But why would any man be apt to do this? What temptation, or chance, could any one have to fix ſuch an odium upon the doctrine he taught? We can make no anſwer to this without firſt aſcertaining what he did actually teach. Let it be ſuppoſed then, that he did not mean to avow and inculcate the ſentiment, that God does, agreeably to his own ſovereign pleaſure, elect one to juſtification and another to condemnation, without regarding any thing in them as inviting him ſo to do, whether good or bad; but that he determines and does every thing, relative to the well being of creatures, with a view to ſuch qualities as he ſees in them, and where is the man who would once think that ſuch doctrine is derogatory to God, as proving him unjuſt, or unrighteous? Could Paul imagine he ſhould meet

with

with oppoſers among mankind, who would charge him with making God an unrighteous Being, regardleſs of moral fitneſs and the equal rights of his creatures, becauſe he taught them that Deity is moved to decree good to ſome and evil to others, only where he beholds a deſert of the one or the other, and forms his decree with a ſole reference to the good or evil quality he ſees in the ſubject? Would any be apt to complain of ſuch conduct in the divine Being as injurious to his creatures, and contrary to their real and proper deſervings? To ſuppoſe this, would be an affront to common ſenſe. Such then is *not* the doctrine which the apoſtle contemplated, as obnoxious to ſome, who will be ready to ſay of it, that it makes God an unrighteous Being. And if it would be abſurd to put the objection which the apoſtle has refuted, into the mouth of any one againſt a ſentiment of this kind; the concluſion forces itſelf upon us, that he was inculcating upon the Romans a very different view of the divine conduct relative to men, viz. that he ordains and fixes their ſtate long before they come into being, and is not excited to it by any thing in them righteous or unrighteous. It is not uncommon to find people diſpleaſed with this account of the divine plan of government, and taking the liberty of proteſting againſt it, as exhibiting the Deity in the light, not only of a partial ruler, but of an unrelenting oppreſſor. Has God, ſay they, made ſuch diſtinctions between men, even from eternity, fixing their deſtiny to endleſs duration, without firſt inquiring what they individually merit at his hand? If ſo, he is arbitrary and unjuſt. This proves it not without occaſion, that the apoſtle interrupts himſelf, in the midſt of his argument, to give the objector a hearing, and confute his plea. Though he implicitly confeſſes that men will wrangle with the ſcripture view of divine ſovereignty; yet he perſiſts in maintaining it; and for this purpoſe makes uſe of the beſt authority, even the expreſs words of Jehovah. "Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion." This he adduces in confirmation of what he had before advanced, viz. *that the purpoſe of God in election, is not of works, but of him that calleth.* He cannot, therefore, be denounced as a blaſphemer for repreſenting Jehovah as acting the part of a complete Sovereign, with regard to the future character and circumſtances of his creatures; for God himſelf poſitively declares, that his own will is the baſis and motive of all thoſe acts of mercy which he puts forth towards the children of men. The goodneſs of God, in which his juſtice and impartiality are eſſential ingredients, is the great thing to be revealed to Moſes in the verifying of the foregoing declaration. His goodneſs is his glory; and this is manifeſted

manifeſted in being gracious to whom he will. See this made plain in Exodus xxxiii. 19, and xxxiv. 6. Inſtead of being unjuſt, becauſe he has mercy on whom he will, being under no influence, in this matter, from any thing there is in the ſubjects of favour, it is the very thing which gives the moſt delightful view of his perfections. It is reaſonable, then, to conclude, as the apoſtle does: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that ſheweth mercy." And if God has a right to appoint whom he will to obtain ſalvation through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſo he has an equal right, in equity, to appoint whom he will unto wrath.

(To be continued.)

For the MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

ON THE IRREMISSIBLE SIN.

THE definitions of this ſin are numerous, and the opinions of authors reſpecting it various. Some have conſidered final impenitence the unpardonable ſin; others conſider it malicious oppoſition to the truths of the goſpel; and others conclude it conſiſts excluſively in the ſin of the tongue reviling the Holy Ghoſt.

But, remembering that Chriſt has taught us to call no man father, and being deeply impreſſed with this maxim, that the Bible is its own expoſitor, we ſhall carefully attend to the ſubject by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

To enter directly on the ground, we aſk for the occaſion of Chriſt's words, when he ſays, "Whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven; but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

A reply is eaſy. Chriſt addreſſed theſe words at the expulſion of a demon, to inſtruct and reprove the Phariſees, who aſcribed the miracle to the agency of Satan. Upon ſeeing the deranged man, at the word of Chriſt, inſtantly become the ſubject of a ſound mind, they wickedly ſaid, "This fellow caſteth out devils by the prince of devils."

To ſilence, at once, the vile aſperſion, Chriſt replied; "Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation; and if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf. But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God (or by the finger of God) then the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

Now let us note the connexion, which is the key of information. "Wherefore," ſays Chriſt, "all manner of ſin and blaſphemy

phemy ſhall be forgiven men; but blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven." The next verſe is more definitive and explanatory. "And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man it ſhall be forgiven; but whoſo ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt it ſhall never be forgiven."

Now, as Chriſt manifeſtly diſcriminates the Son of Man from the Spirit of God, we muſt aſcertain the difference. For a ſingle word uttered againſt the Divine Spirit is blaſphemy, while a thouſand ſpoken againſt the Son of Man will not amount to it. Who is this Son of Man? Anſwer.

1, Sometimes the Son of Man imports the Son of Mary, who was born at Bethlehem and died on the croſs, in diſtinction from the Divinity.

2. At other times the Son of Man imports the Son of God, the Divine Perſonage who forgives ſin, who made and governs the world, God himſelf, the ſecond adorable perſon of the Trinity. Chriſt conſidered himſelf both the Son of David and David's Lord; as the Son of Man and the Son of God, and claimed all the perfections of Deity. But ſo blind were the Phariſees and the doctors of the temple, that they conſidered Chriſt but the Son of Joſeph, and an obſcure carpenter; and conſequently the vileſt impoſtor.

Having aſcertained the different acceptations of the phraſe, The Son of Man, the import of Chriſt's addreſs to the Phariſees will be eaſy and not perplexed.

He informs them that all manner of ſin and blaſphemy committed againſt the Son of Man is remiſſible; but that knowingly charging the operator of miracles with Satanic influence is the irremiſſible ſin. He could bear much inſult; but he could not endure to be ſtyled the devil, while ſeeking the brighteſt diſplay of divine power to evince his Divinity.

It is urged by thoſe who reſtrict the unpardonable ſin to ſpeaking againſt the third perſon of the Trinity, that Chriſt in his expreſſion to the Phariſees referred to the third perſon of the Trinity excluſively. But as Chriſt was the perſon who was operating before them in a miraculous manner, and as he was charged by them with being aſſiſted by the devil, we muſt either conclude that it was his own Almighty Spirit which effected the miracle, or that he effected it by the agency of the third perſon of the Trinity. But as he manifeſtly at other times performed miraculous operations by his own perſonal agency, who ſhall affirm that this miracle was effected by the perſonal agency of the third perſon of the Trinity? For by looking into Acts v. it is eaſily aſcertained, that the divine name *God*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *Spirit* of the Lord are ſynonymous ſometimes in Scripture. We have no more reaſon to conclude that the third perſon of the Trinity was particularly deſignated by Chriſt when

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he ſpoke of blaſpheming the Holy Ghoſt, than that theſe ſcriptures, "the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters," and "God is a Spirit," deſignate the third perſon of the Trinity in a peculiar manner. But the natural conſtruction is this, that Chriſt conſidered them while reviling the Son of Man in danger of blaſpheming the Son of God too, and conſequently of placing themſelves beyond the poſſibility of pardon.

To confirm this conſtruction, that the Phariſees and other Jews who were principally concerned in reviling, blaſpheming and crucifying Chriſt, did not commit the unpardonable ſin, is evident, becauſe while on the croſs he earneſtly prayed the Father to forgive them, in the principle that they knew not what they did. The apoſtle Peter alſo, while reviewing the doleful ſcene, does not conſider the revilers and murderers of Chriſt as having committed the unpardonable ſin, becauſe they were ignorant of his divine dignity and urged to repent. The apoſtle Paul alſo informs us by inconteſtible implication, that if he had known that Chriſt was God as well as man, that his ſin in perſecuting him would have been unpardonable. But he has liberty to inform us that he did it ignorantly in unbelief, and conſequently has obtained pardon.

Hence we conclude that it is as poſſible to commit the unpardonable ſin againſt the Father and the Son as againſt the Holy Ghoſt. We believe that thoſe who knowingly attribute the miraculous diſplays of God to the devil will never be pardoned. This concluſion we realize by comparing ſcripture with ſcripture. For there is no evidence to conclude that Chriſt's miracles, which the Phariſees attributed to Satan, were excluſively effected by the agency of the third perſon of the Trinity. But the connexion leads us to conclude that Chriſt conſidered the Phariſees on the point of committing the mortal ſin by attributing theſe miracles to the influence of Satan, which were the manifeſt effects of his perſonal agency and divinity.

Thoſe divines who hold that blaſphemy is excluſively reſtricted to the ſin of the tongue reviling the third perſon of the Trinity, muſt alſo hold that many of the Jews committed the unpardonable ſin; but Chriſt's prayer on the croſs for their ſalvation forbids the concluſion.

To conclude; if Paul did not ſuppoſe that the unpardonable ſin might be committed againſt the Lord Jeſus perſonally, why does he inform us that he "obtained mercy becauſe he perſecuted and reviled him ignorantly in unbelief?"

SUBMISSUS.

QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS

Waiting for Anſwers.

1. WHAT is the good olive tree from which the Jews were broken off?
2. How old is that tree?
3. When were the Gentiles firſt graffed in?
4. Does a ſublime and heavenly cauſe need cunning, artful meaſures to ſupport it?
5. What is goſpel ſimplicity? If any body knows, let us be informed: for our atmoſphere becomes almoſt too ſubtle for ſalutary reſpiration.

FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

ON CHARITY.

OF all the Chriſtian virtues, charity is the moſt noble and excellent, and moſt frequently inculcated in the goſpel; it would be ſingular indeed to hear any profeſſed Chriſtian deny its importance. But this diſtinguiſhing and eminent duty, like many others, has been frequently miſunderſtood; and its importance, we truſt, will juſtify an attempt to explain it.

By charity ſome underſtand a hope or perſuaſion of the good ſtate of others; or a belief that they are Chriſtians. If any one expreſs a doubt concerning the goodneſs of another, he is ſaid to be uncharitable; and this caution is frequently given, you ought to be more charitable; when the meaning is, you ought to judge more favourably concerning others. It is not denied, that it is allowable to uſe the word charity in this ſenſe; but it is evident that this is not that great and important duty, which Chriſt and the apoſtles taught and exemplified. For in this ſenſe of the word, Chriſt could have but very little charity; for he plainly told the Jews, "*I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. Ye are of your father the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do. Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves.*" Chriſt called the Phariſees, *hypocrites, fools, blind guides*, and repeatedly pronounced, *wo unto you.* This is certainly very far from entertaining a good opinion of men, or ſuppoſing they had good hearts.

Chriſt has given us a rule, by which we may know, with a ſufficient degree of certainty, the characters of others. *By their fruits ye ſhall know them.* Now it is readily granted, that where we have ſufficient evidence of a good heart by means of external actions, we are bound to believe there is real goodneſs, and

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to love and eſteem it accordingly. But to believe that there is real goodneſs, where we have no proper evidence of it, is in effect to deny the truth and utility of Chriſt's aphoriſm.

This popular notion of charity is inconſiſtent with that degree of knowledge, which Chriſt had, and which good men often poſſeſs. If *this* charity be the duty of Chriſtians, it is a duty of which Chriſt has not given them an example. If *this* be the fulfilling of the law, then it will be difficult to make it appear that Chriſt fulfilled the law. And if holineſs conſiſt in this charity, then Chriſt could poſſeſs little holineſs; for holineſs cannot have a different nature in different beings. But as theſe are conſequences, which we truſt none will admit, the notion of charity, as before explained, being a Chriſtian duty, muſt be rejected; and we muſt endeavour to find ſome other kind of charity, of which Chriſt has given us a pattern, and which the goſpel requires. It is true ſome think that Chriſt enjoins it as a duty to think well of all, when he ſays, "judge not, that ye be not judged." But, whatever may be thought of this place, it muſt be underſtood in a manner conſiſtent with our duty of judging righteous judgment. And if we take the word of God for our rule in judging the characters of men, it is ſo far from being an unchriſtian ſpirit, that any other method of conduct would be an implicit denial of the truth of the Bible. And it may not be improper for thoſe, who conſider it wrong to think that a perſon is not a Chriſtian, ſeriouſly to inquire whether this temper ariſe from a ſpirit of true love to their fellow-creatures, or from a conſcioufneſs, that, in order to be conſiſtent, they muſt entertain the ſame opinion of themſelves as of others, while others exhibit as many evidences of goodneſs, as they do; and being unwilling to ſuppoſe themſelves in a ſtate of condemnation, they are influenced to paſs a favourable ſentence on others; whereas, if they judged according to Scripture, as they certainly ought to do, and not by their own partial feelings, their opinion reſpecting themſelves and others might be very different, and more agreeable to truth.

Some again ſuppoſe, that true charity conſiſts in giving to the poor. That a perſon, poſſeſſed of a benevolent heart, will be kind to the poor and needy, as far as he is able, cannot reaſonably be doubted. But that the eſſence of true charity does not conſiſt in giving to the poor, is evident from what the apoſtle Paul obſerves: "Though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Here is a plain intimation, that a perſon may manifeſt great kindneſs to the poor, while he is deſtitute of true charity. Beſide, if true charity conſiſt in diſtributing to the poor, then the poor are incapable of being charitable, becauſe they have nothing to diſtribute. Whereas, there is nothing in Scripture, from which

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we may infer, that charity is not required of all; and the apoſtle ſays, without it I am nothing.

Let us now conſider that charity, which is ſo much recommended and enforced in ſcripture. This is nothing different from love; as the word in the original ſhows, which, in ſome places, is tranſlated love, in others, charity. It is an exerciſe of the heart which rejoices in the happineſs of others. It regards and eſteems beings according to their apparent worth and importance, without conſidering their relation to ſelf. Charity "ſeeketh not her own." Hence it has a ſupreme regard to God on account of the glorious perfections of his character; and feels pleaſed that his perfections will be diſplayed by the creatures which he has made. It delights in moral rectitude or holineſs, which is the chief excellency of moral agents. It "rejoiceth in the truth." The heart, in which this prime virtue reigns, feels a ſatisfaction in viewing the happineſs of others, equal to what it receives from private, perſonal happineſs. It fulfils the command, "thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."

Many paſſages of ſcripture might be mentioned, which ſhow that this love is the great duty of all. "Love is the fulfilling of the law. A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another. He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. Love your enemies."

This love is ſo eſſential, that without it all other acquirements are vain, and will not be conſidered as any part of duty. To feel a ſpirit of benevolence toward mankind, and to have a diſpoſition to do all the good we can, is what the goſpel requires, and without which a perſon can lay no reaſonable claim to the character of a Chriſtian. While deſtitute of this temper, we are unfit for happineſs, and have no ground to expect, that we ſhall be made partakers of that bleſſed ſociety, where love reigns in every breaſt. While we have not this ſpirit of love and benevolence, our character is eſſentially the ſame with that of wicked ſpirits, who delight in the miſery of men, and uſe their endeavours to deſtroy them.

In this excellent virtue Chriſt has given his followers an eminent example, that they may follow his ſteps in being actuated by the ſame ſpirit of benevolence which governed him in all his conduct. And ſince Chriſt by example and precept has ſo ſtrongly inculcated this heavenly grace, it cannot be a matter of ſmall importance for his profeſſed followers to ſee that their conduct correſponds with that of their glorious leader, that they may manifeſt to the world, that they are governed by ſuch a diſpoſition, as may juſtly denominate them *Chriſtians*.

The ſame ſpirit of benevolence was manifeſted in the apoſtles by their unwearied labours and voluntary ſufferings for the cauſe of Chriſt, and the benefit of mankind. A ſpirit of ardent love towards Chriſtians breathes throughout their epiſtles; and their earneſt expoſtulations with ſinners to repent and be reconciled to God, that they might eſcape eternal puniſhment, prove, that their benevolence was not of a contracted kind. This love is conſiſtent with the knowledge of the ſinful and miſerable ſtate of others, and will induce us to uſe all proper endeavours to bring them out of it. Whereas, if charity require us to think our neighbours are Chriſtians, even when they do not ſo much as *profeſs* to be, it neceſſarily prevents us from uſing thoſe faithful attempts to ſecure their ſalvation, which the ſcriptures demand; and under the influence of ſuch charity, miniſters of the goſpel muſt be unfaithful, conſidering their hearers as the friends of God, when they are in reality his enemies.

True charity or benevolence does not embrace one particular character only, but extends to all who are capable of happineſs or miſery; and exerts itſelf in the promotion of the general good, by acting in that ſphere, where Providence has placed it. Hence miniſters and private Chriſtians, who poſſeſs this love, will feel diſpoſed to promote the eternal intereſt of thoſe, to whom they have opportunity to do good, by proper warning, inſtruction or reproof. Poſſeſſed of this benevolent temper, a perſon will enjoy a peculiar ſatisfaction in thoſe who exhibit proper evidence of their goodneſs, and will really wiſh for the happineſs of thoſe, who manifeſt themſelves enemies to God.

The difference between the firſt and laſt kinds of charity, which have been mentioned, is very obvious. The former is ſatisfied with thinking and hoping, that perſons are good; the latter endeavours to make them ſo. *That* conſiſts in uſeleſs and ineffectual hopes; *this* originates the moſt benevolent deſigns, and ſtimulates to actions, which have the moſt beneficial effects in their natural tendency. *That* encourages ſloth and inactivity; *this* rouſes the ſubjects of it to the moſt efficacious endeavours to advance the happineſs of thoſe, with whom they are connected.

The peace and happineſs which reſult from a ſpirit of benevolence, are ſuch, as can be obtained no other way; and, if this were extirpated from the univerſe, complete miſery would be the immediate and unavoidable conſequence. If all beings poſſeſſed that charity which *ſeeketh not her own*, no ſuch thing as miſery would exiſt, but univerſal tranquillity and happineſs would reign triumphant.

Love

Love is the grace which glorified ſaints will forever exerciſe, and which will induce them to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb. And let ſinners tremble and ſubmit, leſt they feel the diſpleaſure of that Being, who is poſſeſſed of infinite benevolence, whoſe goodneſs induces him to puniſh the finally impenitent.

PHILORTHOS.

[*Dr.* TRUMBULL'S *Treatiſe on covenanting, communicated by the Author; containing conſiderable additions to what was publiſhed in the Connecticut Magazine; for which the Editors of this Magazine preſent their moſt cordial thanks, believing it will be uſeful to the Church.*]

ON COVENANTING WITH GOD.

PART I.

COVENANTING with God is of univerſal and infinite concern. Without it no man can have an intereſt in him or communion with him. No man can be pardoned, adopted, or enjoy any covenant bleſſing, until he accepts the overtures of mercy, and is brought into a covenant relation to God, through Jeſus Chriſt. Covenanting with God in truth, is therefore juſt as important to every man, as the ſalvation of his immortal ſoul. It is the immediate, the indiſpenſable duty of every man to repent and believe the goſpel, and to join himſelf to the Lord in an everlaſting covenant, which ſhall never be forgotten. This is required in the firſt and great commandment, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.(1) This requires not only that we know God and acknowledge him to be God, but that we profeſs him to be our God; and that we cleave unto him as our choſen portion and happineſs; walking in all his ordinances blameleſs. Covenanting with God and honouring him in his holy inſtitutions, is an important part of that worſhip which all men are indiſpenſably bound to render unto him, wherever the glorious light of the goſpel ſhines. In perfect correſpondence with this command are thoſe paſſages in Deuteronomy, Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſwear by his name. Him ſhalt thou ſerve, and to him ſhalt thou cleave, and ſwear by his name.(2) That is, thou ſhalt cleave unto him as your king and lawgiver, as your choſen

(1) Matt. xxii. 37. (2) Deut. vi. 13. and x. 20.

ſen portion and ſupreme good: Thou ſhalt covenant with him in truth, binding yourſelves to him and his ſervice, by a ſolemn oath, to be his people, and to walk in all his ſtatutes and ordinances blameleſs. Swearing to the Lord is put for the whole of divine worſhip; and eſpecially for covenanting with God. Iſaiah repreſents the converſion of the Egyptians unto Chriſt and their covenanting with him in the days of the Meſſiah by their ſwearing to the Lord. In that day ſhall five cities in the Land of Egypt ſpeak the language of Canaan, and ſwear to the Lord of Hoſts.(1) In the ſame manner he repreſents the converſion of the Gentiles in general, and their covenanting with God in the Chriſtian church. Unto me ſhall every knee bow, every one ſhall ſwear. Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: even to him ſhall men come.(2) Covenanting with God, was termed an oath, and in doing it the Iſraelites ſwear unto the Lord.(3) Hence ſwearing unto the Lord is put for covenanting with him; and commands to ſwear unto him, and commands to covenant with him, and bind ourſelves to him by the ſolemnities of an oath.

Further, we are taught by example as well as precept to covenant with God, and acknowledge and profeſs him as our God and Father in Chriſt. The ſaints in all ages, and the whole church profeſs the living and true God to be their God, and they rejoice and glory in him, as ſtanding in this relation to them. Pſalm xlviii. 14. For this God is our God forever. Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him.(4) The whole church glories in her relation to Chriſt. My beloved is mine, and I am his.(5) All good people enter into covenant with him. They ſwear by his name, as has been repreſented. On their repentance, and return unto the Lord, the prophet Iſaiah repreſents them as declaring themſelves to be the Lord's, and entering into covenant with him. I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed and my bleſſing upon thine offspring. One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's: and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob: and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.(6) The ſame repreſentation is given us by Jeremiah. In thoſe days, and at that time, ſaith the Lord, the children of Iſrael ſhall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping they ſhall go and ſeek the Lord their God. They ſhall aſk the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come, and let us join ourſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten.(7) In the ſame manner, in the apoſtolic age, all who believed, profeſſed religion, and were

(1) Iſa. xix. 18. (2) Iſa. xlv. 23, 24. (3) Deut. xxix. 12. & 2 Chron. xv. 14. (4) Iſa. xxv. 9. (5) Sol. Song. ii. 16. (6) Iſa. xliv. 5. (7) Jer. l. 4, 5.

were added to the church. They continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread.(1) When men become wiſe, they will walk with the wiſe. They will be companions of all them who fear the Lord.

In addition to all other commands and examples, the words of our bleſſed Saviour ſet the duty of openly profeſſing him, and walking in covenant with him, in a very ſtrong and affecting point of light. Whoſoever, therefore, ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven. But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him alſo will I deny before my Father which is in heaven.(2) For whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and of his Father's, and of the holy angels.(3) Theſe paſſages at once ſhow the abſolute neceſſity and infinite importance of truly profeſſing Chriſt, or of covenanting with God. The man who does it will be publicly bleſſed and live forever; but the man who does it not muſt die eternally.

This covenanting with God, which is of ſuch univerſal concern, is one of the moſt intereſting and ſolemn tranſactions in which a creature can be engaged. It is therefore highly important, that Chriſtians ſhould well underſtand the nature of covenanting with God; the ſolemnity of the tranſaction, and the importance of keeping covenant with him.

As it is hoped that a diſcuſſion of theſe points would be ſeaſonable, and of ſpecial ſervice to individuals, to our churches and to ſociety in general, it is the deſign of theſe papers to illuſtrate and impreſs them.

Covenanting with God implies his willingneſs to be a reconciled God and Father to rebellious men: and to enter into a covenant of life and peace with them, through Jeſus Chriſt. Of this he hath given the fulleſt aſſurance. This was his promiſe to Abraham, I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee for an everlaſting covenant: to be a God to thee, and to thy ſeed after thee.(4) The ſame covenant God maketh with the whole church, and with every individual, who chooſeth him for his covenant God and eternal portion. For this is the covenant which I will make with the houſe of Iſrael; after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.(5) And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.(6) God in theſe paſſages has not only ſhewn his willingneſs, and his determination to become a God in covenant with the ſons of men,

(1) Acts ii. 42. (2) Matt. x. 32, 33. (3) Luke ix. 26.
(4) Gen. xvii. 7. (5) Jer. xxxi. 33. & Heb. viii. 10. (6) 2 Cor. vi. 17.

men, but by the gift of his only begotten Son, from his bosom, to open the way for it, by the mission of the Holy Ghost to make application of the purchased redemption, by all the invitations and promises of the gospel, and means of reconciliation, he shows that his mind is exceedingly engaged in it.

Had it not pleased him, thus to make known his purpose to be a covenant God to men, and exhibited the terms of his covenant, there could have been no rational foundation for covenanting with him. There could have been no rational ground of faith or hope in covenanting with him. Indeed, without a revelation of his will, all attempts to covenant with him would be the highest presumption and madness. But blessed be his name, that we have the fullest assurance on this point. For the Most High to become a God to his people, implies in it immense good; the inheritance of all things. It implies the forgiveness of their sins, their adoption and sanctification, their peace with God and their own consciences, joy in the Holy Ghost, perseverance in grace and eternal salvation. The covenant is ordered in all things and sure; so that every thing shall work together for good, to them who love God, and are called according to his purpose.(1) God himself, in his infinite perfection and fulness, becomes theirs, to make his grace sufficient for them, to give them peace in life and death, to raise them in glory at the last day, and to be their all-satisfying and eternal portion. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.(2) This covenant thus full, ordered in all things and sure, is also an everlasting covenant. Nothing can vacate it, nor prevent the Christian's enjoying all the blessings of it. This is the language of the scripture, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.(3) The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.(4) He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.(5)

This is the covenant which the great God in infinite condescension and grace, proposeth to lost men, through Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator of the new covenant. No man can come unto the Father, but by him. It is wholly on the account of his merit and mediation that any man is admitted to covenant with God, or to enjoy any covenant mercy.

The terms of the covenant on the part of men are, that they shall be God's people. I will be their God and they shall be my people.(6) This implies a full persuasion of the truth of the gospel, and a cordial acceptance of the terms of the covenant of grace. It implies a renunciation of all sin, a sincere and

(1) Rom. viii. 28. (2) Rev. xxi. 7. (3) 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
(4) Isa. xliv. 10. (5) Heb. xiii. 5. (6) Jer. xxxi. 33.

and ſolemn dedication of ourſelves to God through Jeſus Chriſt; and our engagement to be his, walking in all his ſtatutes and ordinances blameleſs. It is required that they put away all iniquity. If ſins as dear to them as the right eye or hand cleave to them, they muſt be put away, and they muſt walk circumſpectly, giving none offence to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. They engage themſelves to God, to be pious, righteous and charitable. To cultivate religion in their own hearts, to maintain it in their cloſets, in their families, in the houſe of God, in all their relations and conditions, at all times and in all places. They engage to love their brethren, to ſubmit to their faithful reproof and admonitions: that they will, in brotherly love, reprove and admoniſh them when it ſhall be neceſſary: that they will uſe their influence to maintain that holy diſcipline which Chriſt hath appointed in his houſe, and that they will ſubmit to it themſelves.

That they will cordially unite with their brethren in ſupporting the worſhip and ordinances of God, for his honour, their mutual inſtruction and edification, and for the inſtruction and ſalvation of others. Theſe things all Chriſtians engage to do in covenanting with God. They covenant to obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded them.

This is the view which Moſes and the Iſraelites had of covenanting with God. This was the language of Moſes in his addreſs to them upon their covenanting with him. This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do theſe ſtatutes and judgments: thou ſhalt therefore obſerve and do them with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul. Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep all his ſtatutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.(1) The covenant bound them to univerſal obedience. There was no reſervation with reſpect to any command or duty, in any relation or condition.

This is the light in which our churches view it, as appears from the forms generally uſed in them from the firſt ſettlement of New-England. They have very generally been to this effect: "You do now avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to be your ſovereign Lord and ſupreme good; giving up yourſelf to him, through Chriſt, in the way and on the terms of the covenant of grace. And you do alſo give yourſelf up unto this church according to the will of God, promiſing to watch over your fellow-Chriſtians as becomes a ſaint; and in your place, to bear teſtimony againſt all ſin, and to walk in the ſtrict and conſcientious obſervance of all the commands

(1) Deut. xxvi. 16, 17.

commands and ordinances of Chriſt; upholding the worſhip of God in this place, ſubmitting yourſelf to the diſcipline of Chriſt according to his word." Thoſe who enter into covenant, engage alſo to give up ſuch as God hath committed to their care to him, and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to teach all under their care to know and ſerve him. In words to this effect do profeſſors generally covenant. They bind themſelves to an unreſerved obedience to the whole will of God.

Having conſidered what profeſſors covenant with God and their brethren, we will now contemplate the ſolemnity of the tranſaction. There is every thing which can well be conceived, to render the tranſaction of covenanting with God ſolemn. His greatneſs, before whom all the nations of the earth are as nothing, and they are accounted to him as leſs than nothing and vanity; his infinite purity, before whom the very heavens are unclean; his omniſcience and omnipreſence; the impoſſibility of deceiving him, or of eſcaping out of his hand, all conſpire to render the tranſaction ſolemn. He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength. None hath hardened himſelf againſt him and proſpered. He can ſave, and he can deſtroy. He is our Judge, and will diſpenſe the rewards of eternity. Theſe conſiderations all combine their influence to make the tranſaction deeply and wonderfully ſolemn and momentous. It is further rendered exceedingly intereſting and ſolemn, in as much, as in its very nature, it contains the obligation of a moſt ſolemn oath, and even the implication of a curſe on thoſe who deal falſely with God. Thus Moſes and the ancient people of God underſtood it. It was termed both an oath and a curſe. Deut. xxix. 12. That thou ſhouldeſt enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath. Nehemiah x. 29. And entered into a curſe and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moſes the ſervant of God, and to obſerve and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his ſtatutes. The ancient people of God in covenanting with God, ſwore univerſal obedience to his will, and expoſed themſelves to the curſes of his law upon them, if they did not perform their oath, in keeping covenant with him. In covenanting, a calf, or ſome beaſt for ſacrifice, was cut in pieces, and the covenanters paſſed between the pieces, the more deeply to impreſs the mind, ſilently confeſſing, that it would be juſt in God, if they ſhould not keep covenant with him, to cut them aſunder, as they had the beaſt, between the parts of which they had paſſed. In this manner it appears that God and Abraham covenanted. Gen. xv. 9, 10, 17, 18. Abraham paſſed between the pieces of thoſe beaſts which he had divided and laid one againſt the other; and when the ſun went down

and

and it was dark, behold a ſmoking furnace and a burning lamp that paſſed between thoſe pieces. This was doubtleſs emblematical of God's paſſing between them, and confirming the covenant. It is therefore written, In that ſame day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham. In this manner did the Iſraelites covenant with God in Jeremiah's time. They paſſed between the pieces of the divided calf, confeſſing it would be juſt in God to cut them in pieces if they ſhould not keep covenant with him.(1) Hence covenanting with God was termed an oath and a curſe; and making a covenant in the Hebrew phraſeology is termed cutting the covenant; becauſe the ſlain beaſt or ſacrifice, at the time of covenanting, was divided, and thoſe who entered into covenant paſſed between the pieces.(2) In ſome other paſſages covenanting is termed, Swearing unto the Lord, ſwearing with all the heart, an oath, and ſwearing in righteouſneſs. 2 Chron. xv. 14, 15. Iſaiah xix. 18. Jeremiah iv. 2. Nothing therefore can be more ſolemn and intereſting than the manner of covenanting with God.

Further, covenanting with God is ſolemn and intereſting, as the ſafety and comfort of Chriſtians in the preſent ſtate, and eternal life in the future, are dependent on the manner in which they covenant. If they covenant in a right manner, chooſing God with ſupreme affection, believing on the name of his Son, and depend on his merits for acceptance, and for grace to keep covenant with him, he will be their God. They will have an intereſt in his covenant love, and in his gracious promiſes. He will enable them to keep his covenant. They will have communion with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. They will have peace with God and in their own conſciences, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. He will never leave nor forſake them.

But if they covenant in a ſtate of unregeneracy, while they have no love to God, no faith in Chriſt, and no intereſt in him, they can derive no grace nor ſtrength from him, and without him they do nothing acceptably. They can never keep covenant with him, nor perform one covenant duty. In the very act of covenanting, they will flatter him with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongues.(3) They will grieve his Spirit, and backſlide from him. They will be but fooliſh virgins, bearing lamps without oil. As they will bear no good fruit, there will be great danger that God will take them away from his altar, by diſcipline, or by his judgments. For now the axe

(1) Jeremiah xxxiv. 18. (2) See Poole's Synopsis, and his Engliſh Annotations on Gen. xv. 9, 10, 17, 18; on Nehemiah x. 29, and on Jer. xxxiv. 18: And Buxtorf on the Hebrew root *Carat*. See also Robertſon's Key to the Hebrew Bible on the same word. This appears anciently to have been the usual way of covenanting. (3) Ps. lxxviii. 36.

is laid unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and caſt into the fire.(1) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.(2) Having not on a wedding garment they may ſoon be bound hand and foot, and be caſt into outer darkneſs ; ſoon may they be cut aſunder and have their portion with hypocrites, where is wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

God's own children may bring grievous afflictions on themſelves and on their families by violating his covenant, and not walking ſtedfaſtly in his commandments. God hath ſaid, If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; If they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments ; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod and their iniquity with ſtripes.(3) What affecting inſtances of this have we in Eli, David and Hezekiah ? For this cauſe God may lay his hand heavily upon them, and remove from them their deareſt earthly enjoyments. He may ſend darkneſs and horror into their ſouls. Like Heman, while they ſuffer his terrors, they may be diſtracted. He may viſit them with diſtreſſing pains and ſickneſs, and like the Corinthians, many among them may be weak and ſickly, and many may ſleep.(4)

Beſides, it is in a circumſpect walk with God, that Chriſtians enjoy communion with him, have peace and aſſurance in life, joy and triumph in death, and a diſtinguiſhing reward and glory in the kingdom of heaven. How important is it therefore that their hearts ſhould be found in his ſtatutes, and ſtedfaſt in his covenant ! (*To be continued.*)

For the MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

SHOULD the following thoughts appear to you to be calculated to communicate any ſpiritual inſtruction to your young readers, they are at your diſpoſal.

THOUGHTS ON 2 TIMOTHY, ii. 3.

"Thou therefore endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt."

THE apoſtle compares the Chriſtian life to a warfare, and the Chriſtian to a ſoldier ; and exhorts Timothy, and with him all other Chriſtians, particularly miniſters, to endure hardneſs in the ſpiritual war, like good ſoldiers. May it not be profitable to trace the ſimilarity, between a good ſoldier among men, and the ſpiritual ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt ?

1. A ſoldier is one enliſted to fight with men for a reward. The Chriſtian ſoldier has, as a volunteer, enliſted to fight the good fight of faith, with ſpiritual enemies, ſin and Satan, the mighty

(1) Matt. iii. 10. (2) John xv. 2. (3) Ps. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. (4) 1 Cor. xi. 30.

mighty powers of darkneſs. And every faithful ſoldier ſhall have a moſt gracious reward. "If any man's work abide the fire, he ſhall receive a reward. Behold, the Lord God will come with ſtrong hand, and his arm ſhall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him."

2. Soldiers may lawfully fight in a good cauſe. The Chriſtian ſoldier fights in the beſt cauſe in the univerſe. It is a righteous cauſe. The cauſe of God. God is engaged in the ſame cauſe, and loves thoſe who come up to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty. The enemies of God will one day acknowledge that the Chriſtian ſoldier was wiſe, in engaging in the moſt righteous and worthy cauſe; while they were oppoſed to the beſt cauſe in the univerſe. How joyful to be a good ſoldier in a good cauſe! and like Paul to ſay, "I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs."

3. Soldiers enliſt under a commander. The Chriſtian ſoldier has enliſted under Jeſus Chriſt, the immortal and glorious Captain of ſalvation. Many commanders in armies have been blood-thirſty tyrants. But King Jeſus is the prince of peace, who came not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them. Emmanuel, God with us, the meek and lowly Lamb of God, is ſtrong and mighty, none ever oppoſed him and prevailed. He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength. He has choſen ſoldiers under his command. "And he hath on his veſture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

4. Soldiers need armour and weapons in order to ſucceed in the war againſt potent enemies. So the Chriſtian ſoldier muſt "take unto him the whole armour of God. Having his loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſtplate of righteouſneſs; his feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace; above all, taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith he may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God. Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints. The weapons of the Chriſtian ſoldier muſt not be carnal, but ſpiritual, mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds. Without the armour of God, the ſpiritual ſoldier cannot ſtand againſt principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places."

5. Soldiers muſt obey the word of command given them from their leaders. And Chriſtian ſoldiers cannot proſper, without ſtrictly obeying King Jeſus, let the conſequence be what it may. Soldiers muſt not parley or diſpute with their commanders. Neither muſt the wiſe and abſolute orders of Prince Emmanuel be neglected. It is the prerogative of Chriſt

over

over his ſoldiers, to "ſay to one go, and he goeth; and to another come, and he cometh; and to his ſervant do this, and he doeth it." And evil to that ſervant who knoweth his Maſter's will, and doth it not.

6. Soldiers muſt calculate on meeting with dangers, difficulties, and hardſhips. And the Chriſtian ſoldier will find, that it is through much tribulation he muſt enter into the kingdom of heaven. The righteous are ſcarcely ſaved. He has enemies without, and enemies within. And one traitor within his tent, is more dangerous than many without. Chriſt's yoke would be eaſy and his burden light, were his ſoldiers poſſeſſed at all times with his ſpirit. The Chriſtian ſoldier has need of wearing his armour, and wielding his weapons, while he labours for the meat that endures to everlaſting life; and builds the walls of his Lord's ſpiritual Jeruſalem. He muſt keep under his body and bring it into ſubjection to Chriſt, leſt he be a caſt-away. Many weariſome days and nights are appointed to the Chriſtian ſoldier. He muſt fight, and labour, and ſtrive, and wreſtle, and run, to eſcape the danger and win the prize.

7. Soldiers muſt be watchful and always on their guard, leſt the enemy come upon them ſuddenly and ſtrip them of their armour and make them priſoners. How much more need of the ſpiritual ſoldier's watching, and praying, leſt he enter into temptation. Be vigilant, O Chriſtian ſoldier, be ſober, for your adverſary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour. You muſt ſtand on your watch-tower, and never ſuffer yourſelf to ſlumber and ſleep, while in an enemy's land. Satan walks to and fro in the earth, and leads the diſobedient captive at his will; and as the prince of darkneſs and power of the air, which deceives the nations, he will accuſe you if innocent, and torment you if guilty.

8. Soldiers ought to be courageous and ſkilful men. But as none have more powerful, ſubtle and malicious foes to encounter, than the Chriſtian; ſo none have more need of true wiſdom and courage. In himſelf he is weak, ignorant, and cowardly. But in the Lord, when he is weak, then is he ſtrong. Chriſt is the only wiſe God. And in the name and ſtrength of the Lord, he will go through his enemies. And with an old ſoldier, he may ſay, "though an hoſt encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear." It is neceſſary that a ſoldier be well ſkilled in war, in order to exerciſe his courage to profit; and neceſſary that he have courage in order to diſplay his ſkill. David could ſay, "Bleſſed be the Lord my ſtrength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight." There is none that the Chriſtian ſoldier ſhould fear, but him who is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.

9. But ſoldiers are ſometimes weak and ſickly. And how often does the Chriſtian ſoldier find his ſtrength but weakneſs; and

and his ſpiritual health interrupted by the leproſy of ſin. So that he is not only ready to halt, but ready to cry out, "why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" And with ancient ſaints, "the whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint. And he weakeneth my ſtrength in the way."

10. Soldiers need a ſkilful phyſician when ſick and wounded. And does not the Chriſtian feel the need of the great Phyſician? They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. Bleſſed be God, the Chriſtian ſoldier is provided for in this reſpect. The glorious Captain himſelf has borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows. There is balm in Gilead and a Phyſician there. O Chriſtian ſoldier, in all thy diſeaſes apply to him, who healed all that came unto him in the days of his fleſh, of whatſoever diſeaſe they had. When wounded by the ſting of the old ſerpent, look unto Jeſus, who, as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, was lifted up upon the croſs, that you may look unto him and be ſaved. Chriſt can heal the broken hearted.

11. Soldiers, in order to have their health and ſtrength preſerved or reſtored, ſtand in need of good proviſions. And the Chriſtian ſoldier muſt eat of the bread that Chriſt can give him, or he muſt famiſh. Chriſt's fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. He that drinketh of the water that Chriſt ſhall give him ſhall never thirſt. The Chriſtian deſires the ſincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby. Soldiers cannot live long, without eating and drinking. Neither can the ſpiritual ſoldier live a ſpiritual life, without eating and drinking of ſpiritual food. O how kind is Chriſt, the Captain of ſalvation, to call his ſoldiers to his table, and invite them to "eat, O friends! and drink abundantly, O beloved!"

12. Soldiers are ſometimes taken captive by their enemies. And God's people were frequently carried into captivity in ancient days. And Chriſtian ſoldiers are ſometimes enſnared by their enemies, and for a time are lodged in a houſe of bondage, or confined in a priſon of darkneſs and affliction. But Chriſt is "anointed to preach deliverance to the captives, and to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, and the opening the priſon to them that are bound." The Lord Jeſus can take from his ſtrong enemies their armour wherein they truſt, and make his people free, that they may be free indeed. But let them not turn again to folly, leſt their Rock ſell them into the hands of their enemies. O Chriſtian, reſiſt the devil and he will flee from you.

13. Soldiers ſhould live in peace and union among themſelves, if they would make ſucceſsful war againſt their enemies. When diviſion and diſorder take place among ſoldiers, their enemies rejoice. But what will the enemies of Chriſt ſay, when his profeſſed ſoldiers are in arms againſt each other? But ſo it has been. But wo to him by whom the offence cometh.

eth. Chriſtian ſoldiers ſhould be of one heart, and of one mind. So Chriſt commands. "Behold how good and how pleaſant for brethren to dwell together in unity." Only let Chriſtian ſoldiers be united in ſentiment and love, and diſplay the truth, in ſpirit and power, and they will be terrible to their enemies as an army with banners.

14. Soldiers ought not to turn their backs on their enemies, nor give them an inch of ground. But how awful to think of the Chriſtian ſoldier's turning back in the day of battle! He who looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. Chriſtian ſoldiers ſhould ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free. God can make their faces like brazen walls to their ſpiritual enemies. It is true, ſoldiers ſhould flee from evil, if by ſtanding they can do no good, but only endanger their lives. And the Chriſtian muſt not tamper with ſin, but flee every appearance of evil. But he muſt not look back from following Chriſt to the ways of iniquity. He that turns his feet from the ways of Chriſt is a backſlider, and muſt be filled with his own ways. But if he turn again and humble his ſoul, Chriſt will heal his backſlidings, receive him graciouſly and love him freely.

15. Soldiers who deſert from a good cauſe, and turn traitors, are always deſpiſed. And how lamentable the thought that there ſhould ever be traitors among Chriſt's profeſſed friends! Such there were in the days of the apoſtles. And their names are recorded as ſo many beacons to warn others. Judas, Demas, Hymeneus, Alexander and Philetus, were ſome who turned away from true religion. What muſt we think of profeſſed officers in Chriſt's army, who love the world, ſo as to quit his ſervice? It is true, an open enemy is better than a ſecret one; ſo that men who leave Chriſt's ſervice for the world, would do no good, but hurt, to continue among his friends. One quits preaching morality, and goes to the bar; another turns bodily phyſician; another goes into trade; do ſuch men ſhow themſelves good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt? If the love of the world leads to all this, how important that this ſcripture be written upon every one's heart and hand; "love not the world, nor the things which are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

16. Soldiers ought ever to bear in mind, that they muſt conquer or die. Eſpecially Chriſtian ſoldiers: for there is no coming to terms with the enemies of Chriſt. Every enemy to Chriſt muſt be crucified or deſtroyed. Sin and Satan can never find quarter with Chriſt. If Chriſt's ſoldiers do not crucify the fleſh, with the affections and luſts, they will crucify him afreſh and put him to open ſhame. Sin muſt die, if grace lives; Satan muſt be conquered, if Chriſt reigns, and Chriſtian ſoldiers muſt become dead to ſin, or ſin will bring them to

eternal

eternal death. If they do not die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs; and ſo trample Satan under their feet, they cannot triumphantly meet death; though he be deſtroyed by Chriſt for all his humble followers. If the Chriſtian be faithful unto death, he ſhall receive a crown of life.

17. Soldiers, after a longer or ſhorter warfare, having endured to the end, retire from the field of blood—the noiſe of war—and the labour and ſuffering which is the lot of good ſoldiers, to a ſtate of peace and reſt. So the Chriſtian ſoldier, who fights the good fight of faith, and overcomes through the blood of the Lamb, ſhall have peace and reſt which ſhall never end. In the world he muſt have tribulation; but in Chriſt peace. There is a reſt that remains for the people of God. And as they go off the field of battle, they may ſing, "O death, where is thy ſting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He ſhall enter into peace: they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs."

18. Come, young people, if you have arrived at the age of 18, you are old enough to be ſoldiers. Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious Captain of ſalvation, is ready to enliſt volunteers into his holy company. An eternal weight of glory awaits all thoſe, who become friends, endure hardneſs, and overcome by the blood of their immortal King. Come, children, if you have arrived to 8 years of age, you may be good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt. Yea, "out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings, Chriſt has ordained ſtrength, becauſe of his enemies." Come, dear youth, repent and believe in Jeſus, and "out of weakneſs, you will be made ſtrong, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens;" and be made more than conquerors through him who loves you; and be received to heaven to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb forever.

S.

July 4, 1805.

N. B. The writer of the above is far from ſuppoſing that he has fully traced the ſimilarity between a ſoldier among men, and a ſpiritual ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. But probably an abler pen of ſome one, who has been a warrior on the field of battle, and experienced confuſed noiſe, and ſeen the garments rolled in blood, might enlarge upon the ſubject. However, if it be but a widow's mite, towards enlarging the treaſury of uſeful knowledge, it is as much as the writer calculates upon. He wiſhes well to the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs, and would, if he could, in a plain manner help the lower claſs of readers, particularly youth, to underſtand and chooſe that good part, that ſhall never be taken from them.

POETRY.

To the Editors of the MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

IF the following lines, occaſioned by ſome virulent attacks on the ſentiments herein contained, meet with your approbation, you will give them a place in your publication.

1 'TIS true, *contingency* and *fate**
Have been diſputed by the *great*,
From age to age, from ſhore to ſhore;
The learned world are not agreed,
If this or that was ſo decreed;
How ſtrange it is they know no more!

2 For God hath ſaid, my firm decree
Was fixed from *eternity;*
My counſel ſhall forever ſtand;
Though hell ſhould burſt her chains, and riſe,
And wicked men huge plots deviſe
To drive *Religion* from the land.

3 Thus ſaith the Lord, I form'd the *light*,
And all the *darkneſs* of the night;
My *pow'r* hath built the vaulted *ſkies.*
How baſe and vile muſt be the *man*,
Who diſapproves his ſovereign plan,
And all his glorious *truth* denies.

4 Thus ſaith the Lord, at my *command*
Are all the nations of the land,
As potters mould their lump of clay.
Then let bold ſinners ſink their pride,
And lay their lofty thoughts aſide,
And travel in his glorious *way.*

5 This is the God, who dwells on *high*,
Who hurls his light'ning through the ſky,
Who deals ſalvation as he pleaſe;
And ſhall the filthy ſons of clay
Pretend to thwart his ſovereign *way*,
And to reverſe his high decrees?

6 This is the God, whoſe hand awaits
To ſhut the doors, and bar the gates
Of endleſs *wo* on all, who dare
With Him to wage eternal war,
And trample on his ſacred law;
How muſt they ſink in long deſpair!

* By fate, is here meant the eternal purpose of God.